



Diocese of Chelmsford Vine Schools Trust

**(Company No 8709542)  
Trust Board Minutes**

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**Date and Time:** Friday, 25<sup>th</sup> November , 2016 at 1.10pm  
**Venue:** Chelmsford Diocesan Offices  
**Membership:**  
Joan Costello\* Director  
John Crane\* CEO  
Caroline Haynes\* Director, Vice-Chair  
Bryan Lester+ Director, Company Secretary and Finance Director  
Doris Olulode\* Director (new appointment)  
Becky Poynter\* Director (effective 1.1.17)  
Philip Preston\* Director, Chair  
Tim Rose\* Director (new appointment)  
Pauline Ward+ Director  
Terri Wood\* Director (new appointment)

**In attendance:**  
Brendon Ince\* CFO

Jill Haines\* Clerk

\* indicates attendance      + indicates absence

**GRE** Great Clacton CE Junior School, Clacton  
**MIS** Mistley Norman CE Primary School, Manningtree  
**ROL** Rolph CE Primary School, Thorpe le Soken  
**SAA** St Andrews CE Primary School, Weeley  
**HOW** Howbridge CE Junior School, Witham  
**LAT** Latchingdon CE Primary School  
St James CE Primary School, Colchester  
**SJH** St James CE Primary School, Harlow  
St Mary's Bowers Gifford  
**SMI** Southminster CE Primary School  
**STC** St Cedd's CE Primary School, Bradwell

118/16 **WELCOME AND PRAYER**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and led a prayer for the Vine Trust to continue to impact on the education of children and young people.

119/16 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received and accepted from Bryan Lester.

120/16 **NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

None recorded.

121/16 **DECLARATION OF BUSINESS INTERESTS/CONFLICT OF PECUNIARY INTEREST**

Business Interest Declarations were completed by Caroline Haynes and the four incoming Directors.

## 122/16 **BOARD MEMBERSHIP**

- i. The Chair extended a warm welcome to the four **new Directors**: Doris Olulode, Tim Rose, Terri Wood (appointed with immediate effect) and Becky Poynter (wef 1.1.17).

As there had been no confirmation to this effect, at Companies House, it was agreed that the three eligible Directors would be co-opted (Chair's Action) for this meeting. An Induction Package will be made available in due course.

PP reflected on a greater skilled Trust Board which is representative of the changing face of the education landscape. PP informed the meeting that talks are taking place with other interested parties with an aim to bring the Board membership to capacity at 12.

- ii. Pauline Ward has **resigned** from the Trust Board.
- iii. The **Finance & Audit Committee** needs to increase capacity and the new Directors could consider membership. It will also be necessary **to set up a Pay Committee and Pay Appeals Committee** (consisting of three Board members).

## 123/16 **MEETING WITH TIM COULSON** (Regional Schools Commissioner)

The CEO reported on a meeting with Tim Coulson (16.11.16); the Chair and Rev'd Tim Elbourne were also in attendance. It was noted that control of the schools in the region was generally positive. The situation at SMI was discussed and TC informed the meeting that consideration had been given to terminating the funding agreement with the academy. However, in the view of the RSC, this is not an ongoing pattern, and the Vine is in a better position to support SMI in raising achievement. Accordingly, termly monitoring will take place in *Ofsted style*.

In the current climate it was agreed that, as a MAT Board, the Vine Trust will be held to account on matters of finance and student achievement and it will, therefore, be essential to act promptly and effectively when required. The CEO and CFO should also be supported in their actions by the Board in order to support a meeting of the political and educational climate.

## 124/16 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23.9.16. were agreed and signed as a true record.

## 125/16 **MATTERS ARISING**

- i. *item 110/16* training (28.9.16) (STC): IPSE training on Inclusion and Diversity has taken place.
- ii. *item 110/16* employment issue (SJH): discussed in CEO Report *item 131/16*.
- iii. *item 110/16* permanent exclusion (HOW): upheld by panel.

## 126/16 **UPDATE ON BEAM PARK SCHOOL, RAINHAM**

The CEO reported that the bid for a 3 form entry Free School (and Autism Centre) has been submitted for consideration by the London Borough of Havering and RSC. Chris Harrison, HT (George Carey Primary School) has supported the Trust in constructing the bid which was underwritten by the Diocese. A decision should be available in March 2017.

## 127/16 **UPDATE ON THE APPOINTMENT OF KEY PERSONNEL**

- a. Jackie Williams has been appointed as **Academy Improvement Lead** from 1.12.16.
- b. Sharon Hogan has been appointed as **CEO PA** and starts on 1.1.17.
- c. The remaining posts are being re-advertised due to a poor initial response.

## 128/16 **STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-19**

An updated Strategic Plan had been circulated with the agenda. The CEO reported that the work which is required to be completed by December was on track. There was discussion about

how some aims and outcomes could be measured such as: 1.1 *Strengthen the Christian character and distinctiveness of our Vine Academies*. The CEO explained that some soft evidence can be produced through SIAMS inspections and from outcomes of Diocesan RE Lead visits. However, the Strategic Plan will always be a work in progress and will remain on the Board's agenda.

### **Vine, Vision and Values**

It was agreed that Resilient Christian Character should be amended to *building* spiritual, intellectual, physical, creative and emotional learning.

### 129/16 **MAT HUB DEVELOPMENT REPORT**

As agreed at the last meeting a working party was formed to set a timeframe for the work involved with the Hub development. The Hub proposal has now been circulated with an invitation to feedback response by 3.2.17; outcomes of the consultation will be reported to the next Board meeting (10.2.17).

**Directors asked how can we be sure that the proposal has been cascaded appropriately?** A reminder will be sent to HTs to pass the information on to LGB Chairs.

**Directors asked how can *ethos, vision and values* be monitored effectively and who will hold HTs to account if the new Scheme of Delegation is implemented?** Currently the process is at consultation stage; further discussion will take place after LGBs have had an opportunity to respond.

### 130/16 **PROSPECTUS**

The document continues to be updated to reflect the changing landscape of the Trust.

### 131/16 **CEO REPORT**

The CEO Report (25.11.16) had been previously circulated and the following matters were highlighted:

- **Ofsted has visited 3 Vine Academies** this term and the outcome has been in line with expectation: ROL remained *good*; SMI are now *inadequate with serious weaknesses* and GRE has moved out of *special measures to good*.
- **Southminster**  
The Ofsted Report (12-13 October 2016) and Diocese Statement of Action had been circulated. A key finding of the report was RI for *effectiveness of leadership and management*. However, the CEO reported that since the appointment of Pauline Ward (Interim EHT in May 2016) there is evidence of improvement '*the IEHT is taking effective action to address weaknesses*'. Ola Laniyan (HoS) has also been seconded until 31.8.17. The LGB has been replaced with an EB (Mike Simmonds, Ruth Bird and Tosca Boothman; the CEO will also attend). There was a very robust discussion about the provision at SMI and the need to respond to some levels of concern in the Dengie locality.

It was agreed that PW be appointed substantive HT and the Trust should set timely measurable targets in line with the Diocese SoA, and also be accountable for continual monitoring; both PW and OL should receive full support from the Trust so that the care of the children and the credibility of the Vine Trust across the Dengie Peninsula will set an expectation of rapid improvement.

**Directors asked if there is a mentoring system in place for EHTs?** The CEO informed the meeting that the Trust is committed to supporting EHTs and a formal approach to mentoring will be discussed. In the meantime a good support group will be set up and PW will attend a Future Leader Course.

### **New Converters**

- St Margaret's Bowers Gifford (joined 1.10.16) is working closely with Bulphan C of E Primary School who will convert on 1.2.17. Due diligence reports have been commissioned. Discussions are also in hand with another local school, Orsett C of E Primary School.
- Three schools in the Colne Valley are actively exploring Vine membership.

### **Operations**

- A claim for unfair dismissal has been received, with an anticipated Court date set for December. Discussions have been held with Solicitors and a response is pending from insurers.
- The CEO asked the Board to consider that in an effort to improve the recruitment of teaching staff future advertising will include an offer to match current salary. After some discussion the **Proposal was agreed.**

### **Progress and Attainment**

- Progress measures are now included on the data sheet which had been circulated with the agenda. Currently data shows that all academies (except SMI) are above the floor standard. The data also demonstrates some obvious weaknesses and they have become a focus for AICs; the newly appointed AIL will have a responsibility for closing these gaps.

### **Issues for Board**

- CH will attend a meeting, arranged by the Trust with HTs, to discuss **finance** (10.1.17).
- All Directors should be encouraged to schedule regular **visits to schools** across the Trust.
- It would be beneficial to ensure that there is a better flow of **communication and information** between the Central Team and academies and LGBs.
- Improved provision of **training programmes** for office staff, HTs and governors.

ROL and GRE Both demonstrate *good* Ofsted outcomes. In particular, GRE has navigated a significant journey to reach *good*; the LGB was praised by Ofsted. The CEO asked the Board to approve Pauline Solosy as a governor at GRE. **The appointment was approved.**

MN The CEO reported that an exploration is underway for the currently independent pre-school at MN to be accommodated in school.

MN and STO LGBs are to meet together from January 2017, for two terms, in order to provide MN with governance support. Becky Poynter (MN Chair) will resign on 31.12.16 and **it was agreed that John McAleavy (STO Chair) will act as Chair of the two governing bodies.**

SJH The CEO reported that recruitment and retention is a challenge. SJH has appointed a teacher from Canada and has approached the Board to fund the £5,000 finders fee in order to make this a permanent appointment.

**The Board were unanimous in their decision to refuse this proposal.**

#### 132/16 **COMPANY SECRETARY REPORT**

There was nothing to report.

#### 133/16 **POLICIES**

An updated Child Protection Policy had been circulated and was **approved by the meeting.**

134/16 **TO CONSIDER ANY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE**

The following recommendations were made to the Trust Board:

- i. In preparation for a CIF project proposal BL has **requested Board approval to use Michael Merrill from Barker Associates**. MM is known socially to BL and there was some discussion regarding the *best value* aspect as well as time sensitivity; due diligence has been carried out and business interests noted. It was proposed that this request be granted.
- ii. The **Finance Policy Review Schedule to be deferred to the Spring Term 2017**.
- iii. It was proposed that there should be provision of an **Estates Assets Management Plan and due diligence procedures for Estates**.
- iv. RO visits had alerted some concern that the use of purchase cards in schools was not fully compliant. As a robust control was necessary it was, therefore, proposed that a robust response will be to **withdraw all purchase cards in the Spring**.
- v. It has become increasingly **necessary to provide training in the monitoring of Risk Registers**. It is hoped, therefore, that this proposal would also forge a positive link between the RR and the provision of effective performance by schools as well as an opportunity to raise an expectation of dialogue with LGBs.
- vi. **All school staff must undertake appropriate Health & Safety Training (in Education) including Trip Training**.
- vii. It was proposed to **delegate approval of Grant Requests (up to £25k) to the Finance & Audit Committee**. This would provide increasing discretion for the Committee in holding schools to account.

**Each recommendation was considered and all were agreed by the Board.**

**The following Grant Requests were made from STO were approved:**

- i. *£3591.65 for Pearson resources to be used to raise outcomes in reading, writing, phonics and GPS.*
- ii. *£1812.00 for training staff for capacity in improving learning and teaching of RE.*
- iii. *£268.35 to purchase Non Nonsense Spelling Resources and Nelson Handwriting Books.*

**Directors did not approve a further Grant Request from STO for £2942.00 to provide behaviour support and prevent exclusion.**

135/16 **ACADEMY CONVERSION UPDATES**

These were discussed earlier (*item 131/16 CEO Report*).

136/16 **ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING (10.02.17.)**

The CEO stressed the importance of striving towards *Ambition for Excellence – the best that a MAT can be*. The self evaluation document has been distributed for completion and will be a matter for discussion at the next meeting.

137/16 **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

There was nothing further to report.

138/16 **DATE AND TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS:**

<b><u>2017</u></b>	<b>Fridays at 1.00pm</b>
<b>Spring 1</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> February
<b>Spring 2</b>	24 <sup>rd</sup> March including AGM
<b>Summer 1</b>	12 <sup>th</sup> May
<b>Summer 2</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> July
<b>Autumn 1 (17/18)</b>	22 <sup>nd</sup> September

**CLOSING PRAYER**

The meeting closed at 3.20pm with a prayer of blessing for the gifts and talents that are used Trust wide for the benefit of children and young people.